

### Abstract

The present invention simplifies the tasks that programmers need to carry out to manipulate (e.g., load and save) archives. This is accomplished by providing a common archive interface which is utilized by the programmer to access archive files of varying formats. The common archive interface implements a common set of methods or instructions which the programmer can utilize to manipulate the files, and which automatically and transparently to the programmer loads and saves the files appropriately without regard as to the format (archive or directory) in which the files are stored. The user (programmer) simply utilizes a finite set of simple functions, e.g., "openArchive", "getDeploymentDescriptor", "getFiles", "save", "extract", etc. and a "virtual archive containing the requested files is returned to the programmer.

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